

Subject: Crispin Blunt MP (Con - Reigate)

Date: Wed, 27 Mar 2002 13:27:51 -0000

From: David Grant <dgrant@STANDSURE.FREESERVE.CO.UK>

Reply-To: 'Traveller-Net' Network <TRAVELLER-NET@JISCMAIL.AC.UK>

To: TRAVELLER-NET@JISCMAIL.AC.UK

I found this on the web (address below). There would appear to be considerable danger that his Bill will get through as it has been given time for a 2nd reading.

David G

<http://www.epolitix.com/webminster/crispin-blunt>

from 5th March:

Crispin Blunt has received support from Surrey MPs Peter Ainsworth, Sir Paul Beresford, Humfrey Malins, Ian Taylor and Philip Hammond for his ground breaking legislative proposals which receive their first reading on 26th March.

The Private Bill titled Trespassers on Land (Liability for Damage and Eviction) amending the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 is due to receive its 1st reading on Tuesday 26th March 2002, and is designed to clamp down on the anti social behaviour of those groups of the travelling community who cause damage. The Bill is designed to strengthen the powers of those who are at the sharp end of dealing with travellers illegally trespassing on land.

The proposals improve existing legislation in the following ways:

Making all travellers on a site individually responsible for damage caused during their illegal occupation.

Reducing the six car minimum the police currently require in order to evict travellers.

Enable the local authority to "request" the Chief Constable to take action .. "and the Chief Constable shall comply with any such request". This will give locally accountable politicians more power to effect evictions when illegal occupation has occurred. This addresses local residents frustration and anger at much current inaction.

Providing powers of eviction on " land forming part of a highway". This was previously excluded, a loophole which had become obvious to people trying to use the powers in the Act.

Commenting today, Crispin Blunt said:

"Surrey residents have had to suffer from the problem and damage caused by the illegal occupation of land by travellers for too long. Only last week The Surrey Mirror carried a report on the eviction of a group of travellers camping on a cycle path in South Earlswood, who had tried occupying the grounds of Redhill Football Club.

The ground breaking legislation I am introducing in the form of a Ten Minute Rule Bill aims to plug holes in the existing Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. The Bill will need Government support to make progress so I am today writing to the Home Secretary seeking support I am not hopeful of securing this as until now this government has relaxed rather than tightened rules on travelers. However I am hopeful Reigate and Banstead Borough Council will formally support it. In any event my minimum objective is to make it a Conservative manifesto commitment"

>From 26th March:

Crispin Blunt with local residents, Councillors Michael Blacker, Marion Brewster, Rob Ellingham, David Pay, John Lyndon Morgan, Susie Garnier and Surrey MPs Peter Ainsworth, Philip Hammond and Nick Hawkins before presenting his Ten Minute Rule Bill, Trespassers on Land (Liability for Damage and Eviction) to Parliament. The Bill received it's First Reading and is due for Second Reading on 10th May 2002.

Crispin Blunt was today joined by Councillors Michael Blacker, Marion Brewster, Rob Ellingham, Susie Garnier, David Pay and John Lyndon Morgan when he launched his Private Members Bill at the House of Commons accompanied by Surrey MPs Peter Ainsworth, Nick Hawkins and Philip Hammond.

The Bill titled Trespassers on Land (Liability for Damage and Eviction) amending the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 received it's first reading today and is scheduled for it's second reading on 10th May 2002. The Bill is designed to clamp down on the anti social behaviour of those groups of the travelling community who cause damage and is designed to strengthen the powers of those who are at the sharp end of dealing with travellers illegally trespassing on land.

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Commenting today, Crispin Blunt said:

"As Members of Parliament too many of us are brought face to face with the reality of dealing with the travelling community. This bill deals with two issues in particular. The cumbersome eviction procedure, and the liability for the damage.

In seeking a solution to these two issues I came to realise I was not alone. All of Surrey, not least around the time of the Derby, has grown used to the seasonal invasions of travellers."

"Law abiding travellers have nothing to fear from this legislation. Indeed their position is made much worse by the reputation they have to carry from the misbehaviour of others. If all travellers respected the settled communities who played occasional host to them much of this problem would not exist".

"This change in the law is designed to rebalance the rights and duties between the travelling community and the settled community. It promotes accountability and good behaviour. It also enables the unwilling host communities some protection from antisocial behaviour and damage."

"This one issue has caused a wider degree of heartache and distress amongst my constituents than any other single cause."